

DISPLAYS

EPSON EMP-822

★★★★★

£697 inc VAT
From www.dabs.com

Office projectors are broadly divided into two types: some are designed for permanent installation, while others are meant to be lugged from room to room or place to place. Epson's impressive EMP-822 certainly fits into the former category, although it has a number of features that make it suitable for projecting from a desk as well as being ceiling-mounted.

The first thing we noticed was the convenient sliding door on the front of the projector. This covers both the lens and manual focus and zoom controls, so they can't be knocked when not in use. Sliding it shut turns off the bulb and mutes audio from the built-in speaker. It's very handy for quickly bringing the audience's attention back to you when you're in the middle of a presentation.

Open the sliding door and the lamp can output an impressive 2,600 lumens, enough for your presentation to be clearly visible in even brightly lit rooms. The built-in speaker is also impressively loud, and sufficient for presentations in medium-sized rooms, although it does tend to distort low notes at over half-volume.

There are plenty of inputs on the rear, the most important of which are the two VGA connectors with matching mini-jack inputs, so you can permanently attach a PC and keep a spare input for laptop users. A VGA output means you can use a second monitor, or projector, and a mini-jack output lets you connect proper speakers if needed. There are no digital inputs, however.

The infrared receivers on the front and rear allow you to control the projector from almost any angle.



However, there's no USB port for controlling your computer's mouse from the remote control. A network port allows administrators to control the projector remotely, and it can even be configured to send out emails warning of problems or servicing requirements, such as a replacement lamp.

The bright lamp means the EMP-822 is noisier, at 35dBA, than most projectors, but this becomes a whisper-like 28dBA in the 2,080-lumens economy mode. This also increases bulb life from 3,000 to 4,000 hours. Economy mode works out at 7.5p an hour.

Bright bulbs and LCD technology don't combine to give great contrast; the EMP-822's 400:1 ratio is average. The Micro-Lens Array (MLA) means more light makes it from the bulb to the screen, and a smoother and more natural picture than on most 1,024x768 projectors we've seen. Colours are bright

and vibrant, too, and we saw no serious problems in any test images.

The EMP-822 is a good choice for permanent installation in a small or medium-sized meeting room. Its powerful built-in speaker and Ethernet connection will make life easier for both users and administrators. This projector is also very reasonably priced given these extras, and is a good buy.

Seth Barton

SUMMARY

- ✓ Bright, high-quality image
- ✓ Plenty of inputs
- ✗ No mouse control

OFFICE LCD PROJECTOR 1,024x768 resolution, 400:1 contrast ratio, 2,600 ANSI lumens, 1.2x zoom, 2x VGA, S-video, composite and phono inputs
PART CODE V11H256040DA
DETAILS www.epson.co.uk

FAQ

Q What's a dual-link DVI interface?

A Monitors such as Hazro's 30in HZ30WS have high resolutions that exceed the capabilities of single-link DVI, which can manage resolutions up to 1,920x1,200. Fortunately, most graphics cards have dual-link DVI outputs that can handle higher resolutions such as the Hazro's 2,560x1,600, but you'll need to make sure that you use a dual-link DVI cable rather than a single-link version.

Dual-link DVI cables can be identified as they possess the full complement of 24 pins in a 3x8 configuration. Single-link cables have two 9-pin blocks, omitting six pins in the centre of the connector.

Lynley Oram

Features editor and displays expert


lynley@computershopper.co.uk

Also consider...

LG Flatron L226WTQ

★★★★★

£178 inc VAT
From www.ebuyer.com

LG's 22in widescreen LCD has a 2ms response time and a claimed Digital Fine Contrast ratio of 3,000:1. It's capable of superb quality, with excellent whites and deep blacks.

There aren't many frills at this price, but you get DVI and VGA inputs.



22in WIDESCREEN LCD 1,680x1,050 native resolution, 3,000:1 contrast ratio, 2ms response time, VGA, DVI
PART CODE L226WTQ-SF
DETAILS <http://uk.lge.com>
FULL REVIEW Feb 2008

HANNSG HW223DP

★★★★★

£172 inc VAT
From www.e-plenish.com


The HW223DP's brushed-silver surround and black stand look classy. The display supports HDCP, so it's great for HD video. An included adaptor allows a component video source to connect to the DVI input. It produces a clear, sharp image using both VGA and DVI inputs, with colours that look rich and natural.



22in WIDESCREEN LCD 1,680x1,050 native resolution, VGA, DVI, 3.5mm line-in connectors, four-port USB2 hub, 5ms response time, 800:1 contrast ratio
PART CODE HW223DP
DETAILS www.hannsg.co.uk
FULL REVIEW Aug 2007

OPTOMA EP727

★★★★★

£387 inc VAT
From www.lambdatek.com/componentshop


Optoma's EP727 is a tiny projector that weighs just 2kg. It has an HDCP-compatible DVI input, and can scale 720p and 1080i HD material to its native resolution. Because it uses DLP, there's a slight rainbow effect but colours are accurate and focus pin sharp. Our dark screen looked black, while whites were bright and clean. It's a great all-rounder.



OFFICE DLP PROJECTOR 1,024x768 native resolution, 2,200:1 contrast ratio; 2,200 ANSI lumens
PART CODE EP727
DETAILS www.optoma.co.uk
FULL REVIEW Feb 2008

HAZRO HZ30WS

★★★★★

£872 inc VAT

From www.routecoit.com

PC monitors as big as 30in may be a rare sight, but their popularity is growing. While most desks will find even a 24in screen a little bulky, there are many professions – CAD, photo editing and public displays – for which a 30in LCD makes sense. The HZ30WS's 2,560x1,600 resolution is three times higher than a 19in screen, and although the price means it's really only a viable option for businesses, we can see serious gamers considering it, too.

The HZ30WS is encased in a sturdy aluminium chassis, not dissimilar to Apple's Cinema range. There's a choice of black or silver, so make sure you select the right colour before ordering. The minimalist styling has the side effect of making it slightly plain to look at, but it's certainly not ugly. The carry handle at the top of the stand seems strange; we can't imagine many people transporting their 30in display from place to place, especially considering its hefty 11kg weight.

However, that's about the extent of the extras. This is very much a no-frills, focused display. There's just one input: a dual-link DVI port with HDCP support. This means it's possible to play video from protected sources such as Blu-ray discs. There are no built-in speakers, no USB ports and no other video inputs.

The fixed stand means there are no adjustment options beyond tilting. All image tweaking needs to be made with software drivers, as there are just two touch-sensitive control buttons – for brightness and contrast – beneath the screen.



This lack of extras is not a problem, though, as the HZ30WS has just one aim: to provide superb image quality. It does this with ease thanks to the Super-IPS screen, which reproduces colours better than the twisted nematic (TN) technology more commonly found in smaller displays. The 5ms response time means fast-moving images don't smear or blur, and the claimed 1,000:1 contrast ratio gives deep blacks and bright whites.

The only real issue was that dark greys tended to merge together a little too much, but overall it's an excellent monitor. Maximum brightness is about right for such a large screen and the backlight on our test sample was perfectly even.

The giant HZ30WS won't suit every taste, and there are cheaper alternatives such as Dell's UltraSharp 3007WFP, which costs around £800 and has built-in media card readers and a four-port USB2 hub. But for serious graphic design and CAD work, Hazro's HZ30WS is a fine choice. Just make sure your graphics card is capable of providing the 2,560x1,600 resolution before reaching for your credit card.

David Bayon

SUMMARY

- ✓ Huge resolution
- ✓ Excellent quality
- ✗ No frills

30in LCD 2,560x1,600 native resolution, 400:1 contrast ratio, 300cd/m² brightness, dual-link DVI, 540x701x171mm
PART CODE HZ30WS
DETAILS www.hazro.co.uk

CHOOSING AN... LCD Monitor

Follow the steps to find your ideal specs

IMAGE SIZE: 17in

NATIVE RESOLUTION: 1,280x1,024

INPUTS: VGA

Recommended minimum in grey

1 A basic 17in LCD monitor with the specifications listed above will cost around £95. It will be fine for basic Windows work, but it will have poor viewing angles and colour reproduction won't be very good, so it's not ideal for colour-sensitive work.

2 A VGA input means you'll be able to use the monitor with every PC, but it won't give you as good a picture as with DVI. This digital connection requires a compatible graphics card, but means there are no digital-to-analogue or analogue-to-digital conversions, which reduce the quality of the picture. A DVI connection automatically gets the best picture; you won't have to adjust clock or phase settings as you do with an analogue connection.

3 A 19in monitor will cost around £110 and has the same native resolution as 17in models, but the extra space is easier on the eye. If you want higher resolutions, a 20.1in (from around £190) or larger display will have a native resolution of 1,600x1,200.

A widescreen monitor makes sense if you watch a lot of movies or play games. The budget models come with a resolution of 1,440x900 (from around £110), while the larger, more expensive models have a resolution of 1,680x1,050 (from around £220).

4 If you want a better-quality picture, look for a monitor with high contrast ratios. The higher the ratio, the whiter the whites and the blacker the blacks look. In images with high contrast levels, you'll be able to see finer details.

The viewing angles are important, as wider angles mean you don't have to sit face on to get the best picture. Wider angles also mean that more people can watch your screen, which is useful if you want to show films.

Fast response times cut down on ghosting. Don't be blinded by the numbers, though, as a response time of 25ms or quicker is fine for all applications.

5 Extras such as speakers and a USB hub can be useful, but don't buy solely for them; monitor speakers tend to be poor, while USB hubs cost only a few pounds.

BENQ W500

★★★★★

£640 inc VAT

From www.rankhour.com

PRICE CUT!

BEST BUY BenQ's W500 widescreen 720p LCD projector is great quality and very quiet. When connected digitally to a PC, it displayed a crisp Windows desktop. The quality of standard-definition clips blew us away, and it handled HD movie clips with ease, producing rich colours and plenty of detail. The W500 provides a good range of features and great image quality at a reasonable price, too.



HOME CINEMA LCD PROJECTOR
1,280x720 native resolution, 5,000:1 contrast ratio, 1,100 ANSI lumens
PART CODE 9JJK77.B5E
FULL REVIEW Feb 2008

LG 37LC55

★★★★★

£468 inc VAT

From www.avcdirect.co.uk

BEST BUY LG's 37LC55 looks fabulous and has the performance to match. It's great for standard interlaced video but comes into its own when handling high-definition (HD) material and progressive-scan DVDs. Colours are rich and natural, and focus over VGA and DVI is pin-sharp. This is a great TV at a very good price.



37in LCD TV 1,366x768 native resolution, VGA, component, 2x SCART, digital tuner
PART CODE 37LC55 DETAILS www.lge.com
FULL REVIEW Nov 2007

TOSHIBA Regza 32C3030

★★★★★

£398 inc VAT

From www.pcworld.co.uk

BEST BUY Picture quality from HD footage and our progressive-scan DVD was perfect with the 32C3030. Colours were rich and deep, and blacks looked black. This TV puts in a good all-round performance for a very reasonable price.



32in LCD TV 1,366x768 native resolution, 4,000:1 contrast ratio, 2x HDMI, VGA, component, 2x SCART
PART CODE 32C3030
DETAILS www.toshiba.co.uk
FULL REVIEW Nov 2007